



Milwaukee Public Schools  
FOUNDATION, INC.

## **Teacher EXCEL Grants**

*“Excellence in the Classroom” Teacher Mini-Grant Program*

### **2009 - 2010 Grant Winners**

The Milwaukee Public Schools Foundation, Inc. sponsors a mini-grant program for teachers to fund creative classroom projects or activities that enrich student-learning experiences. Grants are for up to \$750 each. This is the ninth year of the program. The Teacher EXCEL Grant program is supported by:

- ❖ Generous donations of MPS employees through the annual Employee Combined Giving Campaign. Employees may designate their contribution to the MPS Foundation.
- ❖ Contributions made in memory of Ann Shansky, who was an elementary teacher in MPS for 34 years. Ms. Shansky was an advocate of early childhood education and dedicated her life's work to education and development of children.

This year, 47 projects were funded.

If you have any questions, call Kathleen Kirchhoff at 414-475-8853 or by e-mail [kirchhcx@milwaukee.k12.wi.us](mailto:kirchhcx@milwaukee.k12.wi.us)  
For more information about the MPS Foundation, please visit the website at: [www.mpsfoundation.net](http://www.mpsfoundation.net)

#### **Allen-Field**

**David Galarza, Doris Ortiz, Ann Nelson,  
Kirk Peterson and Christopher Taylor**  
**“Wisconsin’s Capitol” - \$650**

Students at the fourth grade level are learning about the state of Wisconsin. Students will complete a thematic unit that will enhance their perspective of their state’s geography, government, economics and civics. The project will culminate with a field trip to the State Capitol in which the students will have the opportunity to tour the building, explore the history and see how our government legislates our state.

#### **The Alliance School**

**Alicia Moore**  
**“Creative Response Lab” - \$750**

The purpose of this sixth through ninth grade project is to create a *Creative Response Lab* equipped with materials for middle and high school students to use to creatively respond to literature. The lab will provide students with access to audio visual equipment, art supplies, book making supplies and sewing materials to allow them to utilize multiple intelligences when responding to literature. The Creative Response Lab will increase student engagement in literacy and literature by fostering a spirit of investigation, intellectual risk-taking and personal connections to themes of literature and literacy skills.

#### **The Alliance School**

**Carolyn Joubert**  
**“Visualizing Solutions” - \$750**

*Visualizing Solutions* will increase the variety and depth of hands-on projects related to math with sixth through ninth grade special education students within their algebra and geometry classes. Students recording of words, symbols, pictures, charts, tables and graphs will increase their ability to communicate mathematical concepts and reasoning. Through the use of a sketchbook, balsa wood and clay students will better understand the practical, real world applications of math. The use of hands-on applications is the key to engaging the students.

#### **Bay View High School**

**Theresa Schwantes and  
Dirk Anderson**  
**“Family Blood Pressure awareness project” - \$740**

Tenth through twelfth graders will utilize Vernier blood pressure sensors to monitor family members’ systolic and diastolic blood pressures. This project will allow students to utilize this cutting edge technology to learn about blood pressure and introduce family members to blood pressure monitoring. Students will create and interpret graphs of blood pressure over time.

**Clarke Street School  
Lynn Brown**

**“Elementary Reading, My Dear Watson!” - \$550**

Fourth grade students will read chapter books about young detectives and complete study guides based on Bloom’s Taxonomy. They will write their own mysteries during writer’s workshop. The culminating activity will involve students solving a mystery by using fingerprints, composite sketches and their detective notebooks.

**Community High School  
Jane Wall**

**“Martial Arts/Building a Strong Body and Mind”  
- \$750**

Ninth through twelfth grade students will participate in martial arts training in two-hour sessions every week for eight weeks. Each session will take students to a higher application of martial arts with students having the ability to gain martial arts certification and belt rank.

**Community High School  
Joel McElrone**

**“Going Green Home Inspection” - \$750**

Ninth through twelfth grade students will learn how to do a thorough home of the future inspection. Students will participate in a home inspection course through the National Association of Certified Home Inspectors (NACHI) Standards of Practice. Building scale model homes with inspection and energy efficiency in mind will conclude the project.

**Cooper School**

**Kathy Masch and Carol Hanney  
“Mother-Daughter Book Club” - \$750**

The *Mother-Daughter Book Club*, open to all middle school girls, will meet monthly and discuss books about issues of concern to the members such as peer issues, family struggles, puberty, loss and friendship. Each month different mother-daughter teams will lead the discussion and provide activities to compliment the book. The book club will enhance mother-daughter relationships, provide a safe environment to discuss serious and sensitive topics presented in the books and provide strong female characters from the books as role models.

**Craig Montessori**

**Jessica Bahr and Erin Stanley  
“Vermiculture and Composting” - \$500**

*Vermiculture and Composting* will consist of creating a sustainable worm farm (vermiculture) and composting program. Fourth, fifth and sixth grade students will be actively involved in collecting and composting enough food for the worms to eat and create castings that can be used as garden fertilizer. The students will help design collection containers, a plan for the fertilizer, a new worm farm and composting bins. This project will also help build capacity for a student garden as well as motivate the school and neighborhood communities to become more environmentally conscious.

**Anna F. Doerfler School**

**Janet Moreno  
“Old World Wisconsin” - \$750**

Fourth graders are required to learn about Wisconsin. What better way than to learn our great historical heritage through a visit to Old World Wisconsin. The students will visit and tour early settlement buildings of Wisconsin pioneers. It will increase awareness about the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. The culminating activity will be a descriptive essay comparing and contrasting the life style of then and now.

**Fairview Charter School**

**Laura Yale and Wendy Novak  
“All the World is a Stage” - \$750**

*All The World is a Stage* has been designed to combine activities in the academic areas of reading, literacy, music, art, drama and technology in a second grade classroom. This project will introduce students to the different aspects of the performing arts while focusing on improving reading skills, problem-solving and cooperative learning. This project incorporates activities to reach diverse learners through active engagement.

**Forest Home Avenue School**

**Pa Vang Xiong  
“Math Kits” - \$750**

*Math Kits* will be an educational project that motivates K4 students to develop mathematical skills and incorporate family involvement. Each kit will focus on a specific math concept/skill such as shapes, colors, numbers, sorting or graphing. A variety of literature books, manipulatives, puzzles and games will be included in the kits to support students and their families learning together.

**Benjamin Franklin School  
Scott Fields  
“Comics in the Classroom” - \$750**

*Comics in the Classroom* is designed to provide seventh and eighth grade students with a classroom library from which they will be able to check out books to read during a 10-15 minute structured time for silent reading on a daily basis. By providing students with graphic novels, they will be encouraged to make connections with their own experiences and with other books that they have read. Allowing students to check out individual books will ensure that they have an opportunity to read books in their entirety.

**Fratney School  
Carmen Reyes  
“Early Literacy/Take Home Learning Packs” -  
\$750**

The purpose of the *Early Literacy/Take Home Learning Packs* is to provide resources and materials in Spanish and English for our K4 Spanish and English speaking children and families. The Take Home Packs will provide trade books and activities to help parents teach their children in the home environment.

**Gaenslen School  
Jill N. Delie  
“Minds in Motion!” - \$750**

Young children are active, creative and spontaneous. Through the use of a variety of songs and games, this early childhood classroom of K3, K4 and K5 students with special needs will participate in a daily music and movement group. Materials such as bean bags, rhythm sticks, scarves and musical instruments will be used in order to teach basic readiness skills while also developing social/emotional, language and physical skills in these young children.

**Genesis High School  
William Harvill and Karen Peterson  
“Aspire to Inspire” \$750**

In this ambitious venture, 50 high-risk high school students will become socially, politically, culturally and economically mindful. The students become photojournalists and social activists while producing effective writing. Students will take part in interviewing, photographing and recording influential life stories. Their feature stories based on community leaders will be published in the school newspaper.

**Hamilton High School  
Jacob Haskell and Kelly Kulinski  
“Groundwater Model Project” - \$750**

The project will take high school students on a field trip to many fresh water and renewable energy locations around Milwaukee as well as to purchase a groundwater model to be used in the classroom to supplement the trip. Students will explore careers in these fields of study as well have a greater understanding of our impact on the environment.

**Hampton Elementary School  
Kate Rutkowski and Nicole Henzel  
“Experience the Community with our Families” -  
\$750**

The purpose of this project is to take the K5 children into the community to learn about the community around them and see specific examples of what is being taught in the classroom. Through these activities students will be expected to write, read and create projects with their families and return them to the classroom to display. The project will also focus on getting the parents involved by inviting them to attend the community experiences.

**Honey Creek Elementary School  
Amy Hagenow  
“Home/School Activity Bags” - \$500**

An activity bag will be provided for first grade students to take home and use with their families over the weekend. Activities will be provided in the academic areas of reading, writing, math, science and spelling. Included in the bags will be directions, materials, a family game and an evaluation form to be filled out by both student and parent.

**Humboldt Park K-8 Charter School  
Gail Saler  
“Math + Family = Academic Success” - \$750**

Encouragement and support at home = confidence and success at school. Parents will be invited to an informational math night to strengthen the communication between parent and teachers regarding mathematics. Parents will be provided with specific board games and shown how these games can strengthen standards taught at school as well as improve a student's ability to communicate about math.

**Keefe Avenue School  
Mark Eary**

**“Finding Milwaukee through the Lens of Youth” -  
\$750**

After reading “An Inconvenient Truth” 50 eighth grade students will go out into the community and take pictures of the movement of people, ideas and products throughout Milwaukee. This project will help connect the environmental themes in the book to Milwaukee. The central issues examined will allow students to analyze, synthesize and evaluate environmental issues.

**Milwaukee Education Center  
Richard Vail**  
**“eFolios” - \$750**

Each student will create and maintain an eFolio that contains evidence of his/her proficiency. The eFolio’s will include the student’s computer generated work such as Inspiration organizers, Word documents, Power Point presentations, Excel worksheets and other chosen items. They will also contain digital images and/or videos of student oral presentations, demonstrations, experiments, science boards and other non-computer generated work samples. The eFolios will be shared with parents and students in varying forums.

**Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. School  
Deirdre Lafford**  
**“VersaTile Learning” - \$750**

Students in third and fourth grade will independently work with VersaTiles to build skills and enrich academic areas in math, reading/language arts and science. Used as a teaching and learning tool, students will be able to build, maintain and develop skills while working alone or with a partner and self-checking material for accuracy. Independence and responsibility for personal learning will be impacted and developed with these materials.

**Milwaukee French Immersion School  
Andrea Goldstein**  
**“The Pleasure of Reading” - \$750**

Children learn to love to read by reading books that they are interested in. In an immersion class, books in the targeted language are important to offer. The classroom library will be built up with books in the targeted language that are interesting and at the level of the first grade students.

**Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. School  
Lisa Loomis**  
**“Ready, Set, Read” - \$750**

*Ready, Set, Read* will provide 27 first grade students the opportunity to enjoy reading and learning how to read in this new inviting reading center. The students will have several opportunities throughout the school day to explore and work in this reading center and also check out literacy materials and books to work on at home. The materials in this center will provide new opportunities for learning and reading.

**Milwaukee French Immersion School  
Jane E. Nickodem and David Gass**  
**“The Generations Project” - \$750**

The *Generations Project* is a year-long interdisciplinary experience focusing on oral and written communication skills, as well as photography and painting. A class of fifth graders will interview, photograph and paint a family elder. The products of this project will be a biography and a 16 x 20 framed portrait of each family elder. The portraits will be exhibited not just at the school, but also at a city of Milwaukee art gallery at the conclusion of the project.

**Lincoln Avenue School  
Peggy Repka**  
**“Exploring and Enjoying Wisconsin’s Winter” -  
\$750**

*Exploring and Enjoying Wisconsin’s Winter* project is to expose a third grade classroom to different types of winter recreational activities in their community. Field trips to experience tobogganing, ice skating, cross-country skiing and maple syrup tapping will take place. The trips will enrich the students’ learning experience by making them aware of resources in their community that are available to them to provide winter recreation and keep them active.

**Milwaukee School of Languages  
Indalecio Manzano and Tao Zheng**  
**“Calculus Activities using Probes and a CBL2”-  
\$700**

The purpose of this activity-based project is to collect and analyze real-life data using scientific probes using a CBL2 in a high school calculus class. Four science activities connect calculus concepts to real-life science experiments in order to deepen student understanding of calculus.

**Milwaukee Spanish Immersion School  
John Nekich  
“Snow Shoeing” - \$750**

Students get introduced to an activity that can keep them active outdoors in the winter time with their families. After the first snow fall, students in third, fourth and fifth grade will be introduced to snow shoeing during recess. The students will walk a challenge course on the playground while learning about alternatives to transportation that help to preserve our earth.

**Pierce Elementary School  
Ellen Evans  
“It’s Treeeeeeemendous” - \$750**

*Its Treeeeeeemendous* is about trees and the benefits they afford the earth and us. Fourth and fifth grade students will study both deciduous and coniferous trees and how important trees are to our world. Through a variety of activities and field trips, students will come away with the knowledge and appreciation of trees and perhaps spawn some future arborists.

**Alexander Mitchell Integrated Arts School  
Diane Rakowski and Carol Gad  
“Unforgettable Edibles: Leaves, Stems, Roots and Shoots” - \$740**

*Unforgettable Edibles: Leaves, Stems, Roots and Shoots* is a project that will promote plant life cycle awareness and encourage healthy (vegetable) eating habits for our students. Students will plant a vegetable seed and meet the needs of the plant as it grows into an “Unforgettable Edible.” Students will also research the famous African American, George Washington Carver, and the contributions he made to the plant kingdom and the world.

**Project STAY Senior Institute  
Cathleen Hunt, Brad Blatnik and Heidi Miller  
“From Diapers to the Dow” - \$705**

*Diapers to the Dow* is the interdisciplinary “hook” that excites at-risk high school students while exposing them to financial literacy. Each semester 30 high school seniors invest a hypothetical \$100,000 in stocks, mutual funds and bonds competing for the best portfolio performance. The economic concepts learned through this hands-on, project-based curriculum help students develop positive spending and saving habits as citizens within the local, state, national and global economic communities.

**Morgandale Elementary School  
Rachel Schlueter  
“Linking Literature to Life” - \$750**

Students in a K4 classroom will be given the opportunity to link literature to “real-life” experiences. Seasonal thematic units, integrated subjects and activities/experiences will provide the background knowledge needed to enhance learning and understanding in all subject areas. Parents will be involved in various aspects of the units and serve as support and reinforcement through classroom participation and activities at home.

**Ronald Reagan College Prep High School  
Kathleen Westrich  
“Science, Technology and Critical Thinking Skills”  
- \$750**

High school students will use Vernier Data Collection Technology in biology and physics courses. Analysis of data collected with the Vernier Software and Sensors will be interdisciplinary by incorporating mathematics and graphing skills. The project will incorporate literacy skills by having students communicate in writing their data-based conclusion, a natural follow-up to the data collection and analysis process.

**Pierce Elementary School  
Isabel Roche-Román and Mulunda Jones  
“We Are All Connected” - \$750**

*We are all Connected* is about teaching children the “connectedness” in nature and the importance of maintaining the balance among living things. Second and third grade students will learn about life cycles of plants and animals and the relationship between them through activities and field trips. In the end, students will have a better understanding of the basic principles of symbiotic relationships.

**River Trail School  
Tina Johnson  
“Baby, It’s Cold Outside” - \$750**

The *Baby, It’s Cold Outside* project consists of learning centers that are created, introduced, monitored and maintained by special education third and fifth grade students during cold weather recess. Students have the opportunity to strengthen their academic skills in reading, writing, math and technology as well as increase their self-concept and reinforce their retention of basic academic facts and skills.

**Roosevelt Middle School of the Arts  
Kathleen Leonard and Corina Herr  
“Learning Life Skills through Dance” - \$750**

Forty middle school dance majors will be given the opportunity to work with guest artist, Alissa Ferrante. Students will work with Ms. Ferrante throughout the school year on a weekly basis in order to learn original choreographies incorporating jazz, tap, musical theatre and modern dance. At the end of the school year, students will showcase their newly-learned skills as part of the dance concert, which is open to parents, students and the public at large.

**Sixty-fifth Street School  
Tracie Noah, Henry Leonard and Dan Kartz  
“Adventures at Camp Silverbrook!” - \$750**

Forty-five students from grades fifth through eighth grade will be going camping for three days and two nights at Camp Silverbrook. All students attending camp will work cooperatively to fish, cook, build campfires, canoe, hike, orienteer and function as a unit while learning about our environment, nature, cooperation and themselves.

**Sixty-fifth Street School  
Kimberly Gibbs  
“A Trip to Madison, the State Capitol” - \$750**

Students in fourth grade will take a trip to Madison. They will visit the State Capitol, the Wisconsin Historical Museum, the Wisconsin Veterans Museum and the UW-Madison Geology Museum. This day trip will enhance students understanding of Wisconsin focusing on the areas of history, government and geology. The students will complete a “Madison” scavenger hunt booklet.

**South Division School  
Eric B. Losin  
“Mathematics Literacy with Airliners” - \$645**

*Mathematics Literacy with Airliners* gives teachers and students access to SMART boards from anywhere in the room. This technology allows the teacher to write out a math problem using a wireless slate and then hand it to a student to fill in the answer so their work is visible for the whole class to see. No matter where students sit in the room, they’ll get all the benefits of interacting with digital resources and high-impact lessons. Students will justify their thought process when they share their work.

**Gilbert Stuart Elementary School  
Marianne Soldavini  
“Student Volunteers: Observing, Working and Writing” - \$750**

Thirty-eight third, fourth and fifth grade English Language Learners will join with a third grade room to participate in conservation work at the Mequon Nature Preserve as student volunteers during five visits. In addition to this outdoor work, students will go to the Milwaukee Public Museum to compare the rain forest habitat with the Mequon Nature Preserve. A book of reflective writing will be published.

**Thoreau School  
Harry Orkowski and Alisa Nelson  
“Lost and Found” - \$750**

This project is designed to get eighth grade students out into the parks to apply basic orienteering skills and learn to respect and protect the environment. Their basic skills will be obtained from a lesson from a state orienteering leader. The project will take place in both the homeroom and physical education class. Students will be learning and applying knowledge about Wisconsin plant and tree identification through study and Internet research.

**Victory School for the Gifted and Talented  
Carey Flesner and Diane Edwards  
“Lego Education Robotics” - \$700**

*LEGO Education WeDo Robotics* for students aged 7-11, will provide students a head start on simple robotics. Students will learn to build models, attach sensors and motors that are plugged into a computer and configure behaviors using a simple programming tool. The activity pack is divided into four themes: Amazing Mechanisms, Wild Animals, Play Soccer and Adventure Stories including science, math, technology and language.

**Vieau School  
Mary Thundercloud-Eary  
“Our Earth Matters” - \$750**

*Our Earth Matters* is a project in which 30 sixth grade students who are the recycling team for the school will learn how to protect the environment by researching ways to reduce, reuse and recycle. The students will apply their knowledge and teach other students at school ways to create and live in a more eco-friendly environment.

**Whitman Elementary School  
Julie Rezash**

**“Time Sure Flies When You’re, Growing Like a Weed” - \$750**

This first grade project will include experiences with container gardening through the use of a greenhouse, composting and learning to tell time. The class will measure and record the growth of various vegetables and herbs and the students’ height and weight. The project also includes telling time using individual analog and digital watches. Journal writing will include the data and the experience of the greenhouse and composting project.

**Wisconsin Conservatory of Lifelong Learning  
John Kish**

**“Rube-Goldberg Machine Competition - \$750**

High school students will participate in the building of a Rube-Goldberg machine, which consists of at least 20 simple machines all connected to each other, designed to dispense an appropriate amount of hand sanitizer into a hand. The group will compete in the local competition in February at Discovery World. This competition is designed to foster a creative spirit among the students, a look into how engineers plan projects and to learn teamwork in construction.

**Wisconsin Conservatory of Lifelong Learning  
Char Harteau and Lynn Maholias**

**“Investigating Our Court System” - \$750**

*Investigating Our Court System* will affect 79 students and their parent(s)/guardian(s) in grades four and nine. The students will learn about federal and state laws, county government and the three branches of government. The group will tour the Milwaukee County Courthouse and its jail facility, Marquette University Law School, the State Capitol and the Wisconsin Supreme Court to listen to oral arguments. Student communications about this project will be listed on the school’s Student Learning Community (SLC).